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Media Statement

WA 'DIABESITY' RESEARCH CENTRE TO FEATURE ON BRAZILIAN TV

WA-made lupin-based foods which scientists believe can help the global fight against diabetes and obesity are soon to feature on Brazilian TV.

A film crew from the Globo network – Latin America's largest TV network – recently visited the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research-based (WAIMR) Centre for Food and Genomic Medicine (CFGM).

CFGM director Professor Peter Leedman said the documentary would include a segment on the use of lupin flour in foods, highlighting the health benefits identified by research from the Centre.

"Over the past three-and-a-half years our scientists have discovered that, added to foods like pasta, bread, biscuits and snack bars, lupin flour has the power to help increase insulin sensitivity and reduce appetite acutely, which may be beneficial in tackling the health issues of diabetes and obesity," he said.

"The crew found out about our work and decided to feature it on a healthy food segment of a larger documentary on Australia as they thought it would be of interest to Brazilian TV viewers."

The crew spoke to Sophia Sipsas from the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia, taking footage of the Department's lupin breeding program, sampled some lupin-based foods with the CFGM's team at Curtin University and interviewed The University of Western Australia's Jonathan Hodgson about his population-based trials into the health benefits of lupins.

Professor Leedman said a small amount of lupins were grown in South America.

"Australia is one of the world's biggest producers of sweet lupins and, at the moment, the majority of lupin crops are grown for stock feed but the potential for them to be used as a super food is significant," he said.

"In the future, lupin flour could become a key ingredient in a great number of food products, adding nutritional value to the foods and making it a more lucrative industry for growers and farmers, both in Australia and, potentially, in overseas countries like Brazil too."

Lupin-enriched bread and biscuits are now available from supermarkets in WA.

Online access to the documentary can be found via the Globo network website.

The CFGM is a world-class research facility that harnesses the power of plants and genetics to tackle the twin epidemics of diabetes and obesity, known as "diabesity".

Established in 2006 with \$4.5 million seed funding from the Government of Western Australia, the Centre brings together scientists from the biotechnology, medical research, agriculture and food technology sectors to investigate new ways of beating these growing health conditions.

Other CFGM partners include the major Universities and Hospitals in WA, CSIRO Plant Industry, the Telethon Institute for Child Health, the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia, and biotech company Proteomics International.

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